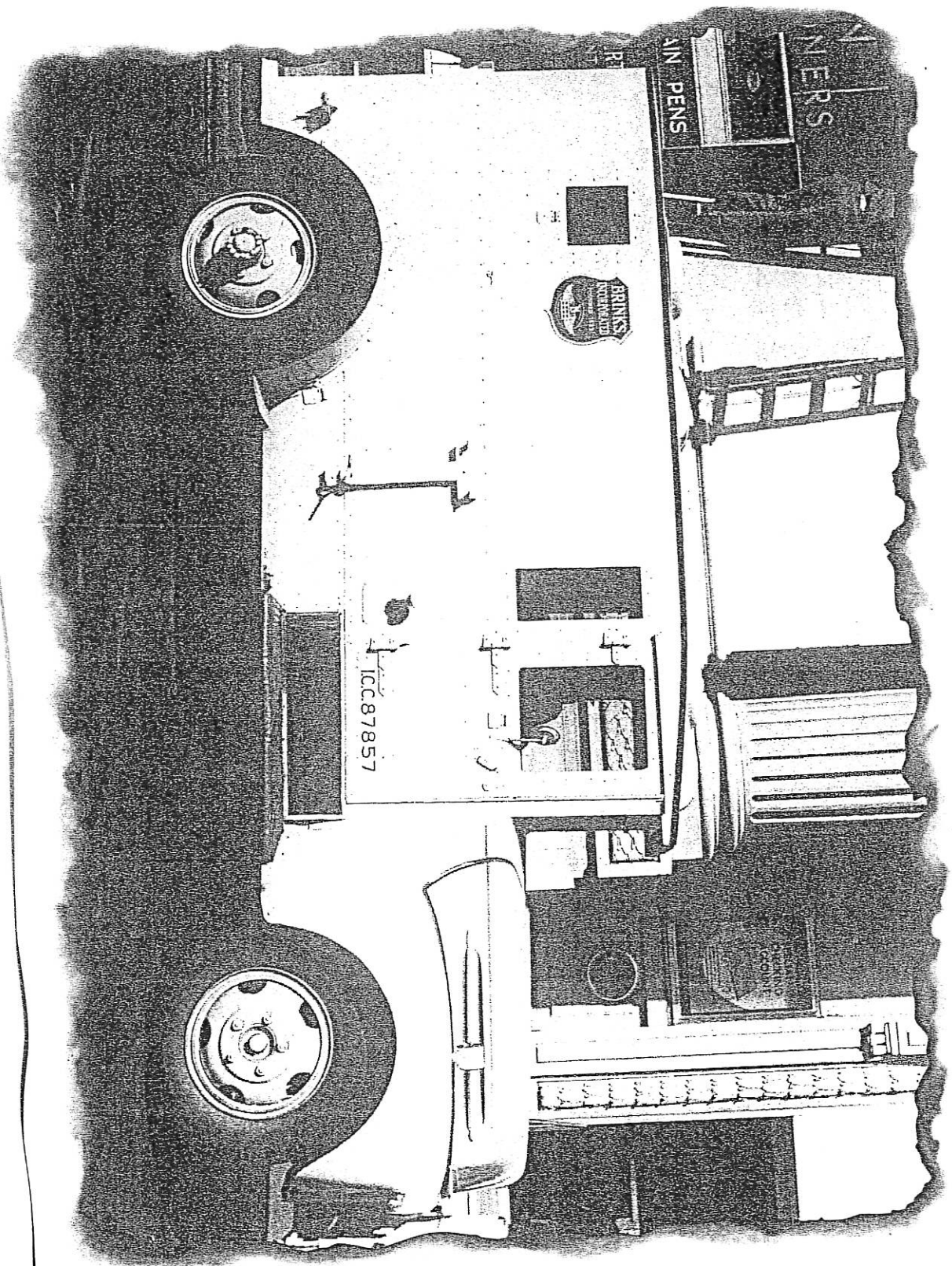


LESSON 4

The Brink's Robbery



Joseph "Big Joe" McGinnis dreamed of committing the perfect crime. In 1948 he hooked up with Tony "Fats" Pino.

Pino shared McGinnis's dream.

Together, these two longtime criminals set to work. They spent two years planning a flawless robbery. Nothing would be left to chance. No evidence would be left behind. And, if all went well, they would both end up rich.

² The two thieves picked a tough target to rob—the Brink's Company in Boston. Brink's is an armored car service. It sends steel-plated cars to pick up money from stores around

Brink's armored trucks such as this one, filled with cash on the way to vaults, have been the targets of many robbers. But one gang didn't stop at just the money in a single truck. They went straight to Brink's headquarters.

town. The armored cars take the money to Brink's headquarters. There it is counted, sorted, and held until the stores need it again. In 1950, as much as \$10 million a day flowed through the Brink's office.

³ McGinnis and Pino planned their robbery with great care. They picked nine other men to join them. These were not just any nine men. Each brought a special skill to the group. Some, for instance, were good drivers or sharp lookout men. Also, seven of the men had to be the same size. McGinnis and Pino chose men who were about five feet nine inches tall and weighed between 170 and 180 pounds. These men would be the ones to enter the Brink's office and bring out the money. They would all dress alike. They would wear the same scary masks, rubber-soled shoes, gloves, coats, and caps. That would make it hard for the Brink's guards to identify them. (McGinnis would be one of the seven, but Pino was too heavy for the job. He agreed to stay with the getaway truck.)

⁴ Robbing the Brink's headquarters would not be easy. The place was full of steel vaults and armed guards.

McGinnis and Pino knew this. So they took plenty of time. They studied the layout of the building. They found out when the guards were on duty and where they were stationed. They watched the money flow in and out of the office. They knew when the big money was there.

⁵ One of the toughest problems they faced was the locks. The gang had to pass through five locked doors to get from the street to the Brink's office. McGinnis and Pino came up with a bold plan. Late one night, a few of the gang members slipped into the building. One of them, a professional locksmith, removed the lock on the first door. He took it away and quickly made a key for it. Then—that same night—he hurried back to the Brink's building. He got the lock back in place before anyone noticed it was missing.

⁶ The robbers returned on four other nights. Each time they repeated their actions. They made keys for the locks on the four other doors. Now they would be able to walk right into the Brink's office. There, they knew, they would find guards standing inside a wire cage. That was where all the money was.

⁷ Next, McGinnis and Pino made the gang practice the robbery. More than 20 times, the thieves slipped into the building. They used their keys to unlock door after door. Each time, they got right up to the innermost door. Then they turned and left.

⁸ At last, McGinnis and Pino decided they were ready for the real thing. On January 17, 1950, they gave the signal. That night, a little before seven o'clock, the men took their places. Seven of them put on masks and sneaked into the building. They opened the five locked doors. At 7:10 p.m., they opened the innermost door. They were in the Brink's office. There, as expected, they saw five guards. The guards were all inside the wire cage, counting money.

⁹ The thieves stuck their guns through the holes in the cage. "This is a stickup," one growled. "Open the gate and don't give us any trouble." Thomas Lloyd, the head guard, looked at the seven drawn guns. He knew it was hopeless to put up a fight. He instructed one of the other guards to go ahead and open the cage door.

¹⁰ Inside the cage, the thieves ordered the guards to lie facedown on the floor. They tied the guards' hands behind their backs. In addition, they tied their feet together and put tape across their mouths. Then the crooks grabbed the money. They took all they could carry.

In total, they stole more than 1,200 pounds in coins, bills, and checks. By 7:27 p.m. they were out of the building. The robbery had gone perfectly. In cash alone, they had made off with exactly \$1,218,211.29!

¹¹ When news of the heist spread, people were stunned. They hadn't thought anyone would ever dare rob Brink's. But, clearly, someone had. The police had no clues about who had done it. They searched everywhere. They organized a huge manhunt, but they didn't even know whom they were looking for. All they knew for sure was that the seven robbers were "of medium weight and height."

¹² Meanwhile, the Brink's robbers played it safe. They drove the loot to the home of jazz Maffie in nearby Roxbury. Then each man went back home to his family. The next day they all went to their regular day jobs as if nothing had happened. The thieves stayed calm. They waited a month before splitting up the money. Each man got about \$100,000.

¹³ For six years, the police tried to solve the crime. They failed. But during that time, trouble was brewing inside the gang. One of the robbers did not like the way the money had been divided. Specs O'Keefe began demanding a larger share of the loot. McGinnis and the others became

worried. They feared O'Keefe might go to the police. So they hired a gunman named Trigger Burke to kill him. One day Burke opened fire as O'Keefe drove by in his car. Luckily for O'Keefe—and unluckily for the rest of the gang—Burke missed his target.

¹⁴ Furious about the attack, O'Keefe did turn to the police. He told them the whole story. The police quickly rounded up all the Brink's robbers. The 11 men were brought to trial in 1956. All of them, including Specs O'Keefe, were found guilty. Since O'Keefe had helped solve the crime, however, police allowed him to go free. The rest of the gang got long prison terms. In the end then, the dream of Big Joe McGinnis and Fats Pino had turned into a nightmare.



If you have been timed while reading this article, enter your reading time below. Then turn to the Words-per-Minute Table on page 55 and look up your reading speed (words per minute). Enter your reading speed on the graph on page 56.

Reading Time: Lesson 4

Minutes : Seconds

A Finding the Main Idea

One statement below expresses the main idea of the article. One statement is too general, or too broad. The other statement explains only part of the article; it is too narrow. Label the statements using the following key:

M—Main Idea B—Too Broad N—Too Narrow

- _____ 1. The Brink's robbery took a long time to plan.
- _____ 2. The Brink's robbery is famous because it took great planning and the robbers left no clues.
- _____ 3. To help with their robbery, McGinnis and Pino chose skilled men of average height and weight.

_____ Score 15 points for a correct M answer.

_____ Score 5 points for each correct B or N answer.

_____ Total Score: Finding the Main Idea

B Recalling Facts

How well do you remember the facts in the article? Put an X in the box next to the answer that correctly completes each statement about the article.

1. The target of the robbery was the Brink's Company in
 - ☐ a. New York City.
 - ☐ b. Los Angeles.
 - ☐ c. Boston.
2. Every day in 1950, the Brink's office handled about
 - ☐ a. \$1 million.
 - ☐ b. \$10 million.
 - ☐ c. \$100 million.
3. Pino did not enter the Brink's office because he was too
 - ☐ a. heavy.
 - ☐ b. nervous.
 - ☐ c. tall.
4. When the thieves opened the innermost door of the Brink's office, they found
 - ☐ a. an armored car.
 - ☐ b. police waiting for them.
 - ☐ c. guards counting the money.
5. Six years after the robbery, Specs O'Keefe wanted
 - ☐ a. a bigger share of the money.
 - ☐ b. to tell newspaper reporters about his role in the robbery.
 - ☐ c. to kill the rest of the robbers.

Score 5 points for each correct answer.

_____ Total Score: Recalling Facts

C Making Inferences

When you combine your own experience with information from a text to draw a conclusion that is not directly stated in that text, you are making an inference. Below are five statements that may or may not be inferences based on information in the article. Label the statements using the following key:

C—Correct Inference F—Faulty Inference

- _____ 1. Joe McGinnis and Tony Pino trusted and worked well with each other.
- _____ 2. It would be easier to rob a regular car than it would to rob an armored truck.
- _____ 3. The men who took part in the Brink's robbery were impatient and unable to keep a secret.
- _____ 4. The guards who did not resist the robbers were cowards.
- _____ 5. The robbers could have gotten away with the money even without a getaway vehicle.

Score 5 points for each correct answer.

_____ Total Score: Making Inferences

D Using Words Precisely

Each numbered sentence below contains an underlined word or phrase from the article. Following the sentence are three definitions. One definition is closest to the meaning of the underlined word. One definition is opposite or nearly opposite. Label those two definitions using the following key; do not label the remaining definition.

C—Closest O—Opposite or Nearly Opposite

1. Together, these two longtime criminals set to work.
 - _____ a. people who obey the law
 - _____ b. people who know a lot about crimes
 - _____ c. people who break laws
2. They spent two years planning a flawless robbery.
 - _____ a. perfect
 - _____ b. full of errors
 - _____ c. difficult
3. Nothing would be left to chance.
 - _____ a. the last moment
 - _____ b. luck
 - _____ c. planning
4. One of them, a professional locksmith, removed the lock on the first door.
 - _____ a. without skill or experience
 - _____ b. expert
 - _____ c. talkative

5. Furious about the attack, O'Keefe did turn to the police.

- _____ a. extremely angry
- _____ b. surprised
- _____ c. happy

_____ Score 3 points for each correct C answer.

_____ Score 2 points for each correct O answer.

_____ **Total Score: Using Words Precisely**

Enter the four total scores in the spaces below, and add them together to find your Reading Comprehension Score. Then record your score on the graph on page 57.

Score **Question Type**

Lesson 4

_____ Finding the Main Idea

_____ Recalling Facts

_____ Making Inferences

_____ Using Words Precisely

_____ **Reading Comprehension Score**

Author's Approach

Put an X in the box next to the correct answer.

1. The main purpose of the first paragraph is to

- ☐ a. describe the steps in the robbery plan.
- ☐ b. compare Big Joe McGinnis and Fats Pino.
- ☐ c. emphasize how well the robbery was planned.

2. From the statements below, choose those that you believe the authors would agree with.

- ☐ a. The robbers were careful and patient.
- ☐ b. Brink's guards were surprised when the robbers walked in.
- ☐ c. The police were close to identifying the robbers even before Specs O'Keefe told them the whole story.

3. Choose the statement below that is the weakest argument for becoming a robber.

- ☐ a. Robbing could make you rich.
- ☐ b. Robbers run the risk of being killed.
- ☐ c. Robbers run the risk of being arrested and put in jail.

4. The authors probably wrote this article to

- ☐ a. tell an interesting story about a famous robbery.
- ☐ b. teach readers how to become robbers.
- ☐ c. show how security measures have changed since 1950.

_____ Number of correct answers

Record your personal assessment of your work on the Critical Thinking Chart on page 58.

Summarizing and Paraphrasing

Follow the directions provided for questions 1 and 2. Put an X in the box next to the correct answer for question 3.

1. Complete the following one-sentence summary of the article using the lettered phrases from the phrase bank below. Write the letters on the lines.

Phrase Bank

- a. the robbers' division of the loot, their disagreements, and their arrest and punishment
- b. what happened during the robbery
- c. the preparation for the robbery

The article "The Brink's Robbery" begins with _____, goes on to explain _____, and ends with _____.

2. Reread paragraph 12 in the article. Below, write a summary of the paragraph in no more than 25 words.

Reread your summary and decide whether it covers the important ideas in the paragraph. Next, decide how to shorten the summary to 15 words or less without leaving out any essential information. Write this summary below.

3. Choose the best one-sentence paraphrase for the following sentence from the article: "Since O'Keefe had helped solve the crime, however, police allowed him to go free."

- ☐ a. Because he had helped them, the police did not put O'Keefe in jail.
- ☐ b. O'Keefe was set free because he had not been part of the crime.
- ☐ c. After O'Keefe solved the crime, the police let him go free.

_____ Number of correct answers

Record your personal assessment of your work on the Critical Thinking Chart on page 58.

Critical Thinking

Follow the directions provided for questions 1 and 4. Put an X in the box next to the correct answer for question 3.

1. For each statement below, write O if it expresses an opinion or write F if it expresses a fact.

_____ a. McGinnis and Pino deserved to succeed in their robbery because they were so careful and patient.

_____ b. The robbery took place on January 17, 1950.

_____ c. Police were unable to solve the Brink's case for six years.

2. From what the article told about the Brink's security system, you can predict that

- ☐ a. Brink's kept the system exactly the same after the robbery.
- ☐ b. Brink's improved their security system after the robbery.
- ☐ c. after the robbery, Brink's decided that security systems don't work anyway, so they would not bother with a security system anymore.

3. Choose from the letters below to correctly complete the following statement. Write the letters on the lines.

In the article, _____ and _____ are different.

- a. how Specs O'Keefe felt about his split of the loot
- b. how Big Joe McGinnis felt about his split of the loot
- c. how Tony Pino felt about his split of the loot

4. Reread paragraph 13. Then choose from the letters below to correctly complete the following statement. Write the letters on the lines.

According to paragraph 13, _____ because _____

- a. the police were not able to solve the crime for six years
- b. the robbers were afraid that Specs O'Keefe would tell the police who had committed the robbery
- c. the robbers hired a gunman to kill Specs O'Keefe

Personal Response

What would you have done if you had been one of the workers counting the money and the robbers with guns had surprised you?

Self-Assessment

When I was reading the article, I was having trouble with _____

_____ Number of correct answers

Record your personal assessment of your work on the Critical Thinking Chart on page 58.